

Schools Forum

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 18 September 2023

Forum Members Present: Andy Park, Gavin Shortall, Cllr Reid, Angela Stansfield, Colin Harvey-Ribgy, Alan Braven, Amy Davenport, Iram Cheema, Isabelle Qamar, Lee Ormsby, Hatim Kapacee, Tony Daly, Lolita Hall, Walid Omara, Joseph Brownridge, Joshua Rowe, Helen Child, Jill Usher, Cathryn Baggaley, John Morgan

Also Present: Anne Summerfield, Amanda Corcoran, Paul Greenwood, Matthew Hoeksma, Vandhna Kohli, Ann Salata, Cllr Garry Bridges

Apologies: Mike Cooke, Edward Vitalis, Antonio De Paola, Karl Harrison, Saeeda Ishaq

SF/23/12. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2023 were submitted for consideration as a correct record. Helen Child noted that their name was referenced as present in the minutes, but that they were not.

Decision

To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2023 as a correct record, subject to the amendment above.

SF/23/13. Funding Updates Summer 2023

The Forum considered a report of the Directorate Finance Lead – Education and Schools provided a summary and impact of the various Department of Education funding announcements that had been made prior to the summer break. The areas subject to announcements were: Early Years – Additional funding from September 2023; Expansion of early years offer from April 2024; Early Years funding consultation; and National Funding Formula 2024/25 Updates; Uplift on NFF rates; Split sites funding; and growth fund. The Teachers Pay Additional Grant, which had additional funding for schools from September 2023, was also presented in the report.

School Forum members were asked to note and comment:

- Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG) allocation from September 2023.
- Expansion of early years offer for working parents from April 2024 and the DfE consultation on funding allocation for the extended offer.
- National Funding Formula (NFF) 2024/25 updates, and the potential impact.
- Teacher Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) from September 2023.

Members raised concerns relating to capacity in the expansion of the early years offer and the financing of the offer.

The Directorate Finance Lead – Education and Schools noted that issues had been raised in the department's covering letter response to the consultation. They noted that they did not yet have all the detail but were working on a sufficiency assessment.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People noted that if the expansion was done 'on the cheap' that would be an issue. They recognised the challenges this could bring and stated that had been raised by the Council through various forums.

In terms of the National Funding Formula, a query was raised by a member regarding the disparity in growth funding between maintained and academy schools.

This was noted as being due to Maintained Schools funding being from September to March, whereas Academies was September to August and therefore their figure was higher.

A query was raised as to why the requirement for being a Good or Outstanding school had been removed from the falling rolls fund. This was because Local Authority's had believed that to be an unfair criterion and had referenced so in their responses to consultations.

In relation to the Teachers Pay Additional Grants, a member queried when AP and special schools would receive notice of the grant they would receive, as it had been stated that their funding would go through the Local Authority first. The aim was for that information to be provided by the end of September 2023.

It was noted that the vast majority of school's had budgeted for a 5% increase in budgets to cover teachers pay, and it was hoped that this budgeting would cover the gap between the grant and what schools themselves were required to fund.

A member noted that the grant had not been extended to Maintained Nurseries and referenced the difficulties this would cause. They were informed that nothing official had been confirmed on this and the Directorate Finance Lead – Education and Schools asked to be updated by the Maintained Nurseries representative on any updates they received.

Another member raised concerns that their grant was not as high as expected. It was noted that this was due to the formula used by Government to decide on the percentage of the increase that school's would receive in a grant.

The Chair noted that across their Academy Trust, the grant received was different for all schools as a percentage.

Decision

School Forum members noted:

- Early Years Supplementary Grant (EYSG) allocation from September 2023.
- Expansion of early years offer for working parents from April 2024 and the DfE consultation on funding allocation for the extended offer.
- National Funding Formula (NFF) 2024/25 updates, and the potential impact.

- Teacher Pay Additional Grant (TPAG) from September 2023.